



In Recital

Rob Curtis, piano

Wednesday, April 2, 2003 at 8:00 pm

Capriccio on the Departure of His Most Beloved Brother (1704)	Johann Sebastian Bach
1. Is a wheedling by friends to convince him to stay	(1685 - 1750)
2. Is a setting-forth of various casualties that might befall him on his journey	
3. Is a general Lament by his friends	
4. Now come the friends - seeing that it cannot be otherwise - and bid him farewell	
5. Air of the Postilion	
6. Fugue in imitation of the postilion's horn	

Sonata No. 21 in C major, "Waldstein", Op. 53 (1803 - 4)	Ludwig van Beethoven
Allegro con brio	(1770 - 1827)
Introduzione. Adagio molto	
Rondo. Allegretto moderato - Prestissimo	

Intermission

Piano Sonata (1939 - 41)	Aaron Copland
Molto moderato	(1900 - 1990)
Vivace	
Andante sostenuto	

Scherzo in E-Flat minor, Op. 4 (1851)	Johannes Brahms
	(1833 - 1897)

This recital is presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Music degree.

Mr Curtis is the recipient of a Louise McKinney Post-Secondary Scholarship, a Peace River Pioneer Memorial Scholarship and a Beryl Barns Memorial Scholarship (Undergraduate).

A reception will follow in the Arts Lounge.

Program Notes

When he was nineteen years old, Bach's eldest brother Jacob left to play oboe with the Swiss Guards. This formed Bach's impetus to write the Capriccio on the Departure of His Most Beloved Brother - the only programmatic work he ever wrote for solo keyboard. Undertaking such a long trip was a much more dangerous proposition in 1704 than it is in today's age of airlines and traveller's cheques, and the sadness and worry surrounding Jacob's departure is well reflected in the opening movements of the capriccio. The piece concludes with two movements that imitate the horn-calls of the postilion - that is, the person who rode and guided the first pair of horses drawing a coach.

The dedication of Beethoven's twenty-first sonata to Count Ferdinand von Waldstein gave us the name we assign it in English, but the French have perhaps a more appropriate title: "l'Aurore", that is, "daybreak". Originally following this first movement was a very long and slow movement - described by one author as "somewhat bovine" - but Beethoven's friends convinced him to replace it with the beautiful (and much shorter!) Introduzione. This movement does not come to any resolution at its end but rather flows directly into the Rondo. In the Rondo, you will hear the main theme come back several times, with episodes in between; the final statements of the main theme are marked "Prestissimo" - as fast as possible - and conclude the sonata with a bright sunrise.

Aaron Copland wrote his Piano Sonata while on tour in South America. He was leaving a hotel one day and set down his bags for a moment, only to have them stolen - the nearly-completed sonata along with them. He reconstructed the sonata from memory, with some help from friends who had heard snippets of the piece. This sonata is a very personal expression by Copland, who wrote it during a time when he was writing a lot of music with deliberate commercial appeal - a time also when the world was at war. Elements of jazz and American folk music are present, alongside very modern techniques such as polytonality and bimodality.

Brahms' Scherzo, Op. 4 is an early work by the composer, but already he was being praised by established composers such as Liszt and Schumann. Schumann was said to have called this piece "great" - an endorsement which doubtlessly sounds more effusive in German. The term "scherzo" means "joke", but this particular scherzo is in a more serious vein and derives its title more from its stilted rhythms and abrupt changes in character.

